



Nebraska Supreme Court

Community Outreach through Technology

This year we are celebrating the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, with a special focus on liberty and the role of the law.

Our judiciary plays an important role in the preservation of our liberty by defending and supporting the constitutional freedoms we hold dear. The role of the judiciary, in turn, must be preserved and bolstered by the support of our citizens. Helping the public understand the important role the judiciary plays in the preservation of liberty is part of every judge's job, and collectively the judiciary is committed to educating and informing our citizens of the role of the courts in our society. Citizen support turns on citizen access to the courts, and in the 21st Century, access necessarily implies use of the electronic and visual media. The Nebraska Supreme Court has recently taken steps to increase access through those media.

For the first time ever, both the Nebraska Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals have been

able to webcast proceedings and broadcast over the State's closed-circuit TV system. Beginning in January 2009, anyone can watch oral arguments live by going to the Court's website at www.supremecourt.ne.gov/oral-arguments/livevideo.shtml or by going to NETV's public media website www.netnebraska.org/publicmedia/capitol.html.

Likewise, some of Nebraska's trial courts are also experimenting with cameras in the courtroom. Last summer, in another first, Judge Paul Korslund of Beatrice allowed news cameras in his courtroom during a jury trial. Excerpts from that homicide trial were broadcast on a number of Nebraska television stations. Judge Korslund is also using a webcam to feed court proceedings to grade school and high school classrooms in Beatrice. Judge Korslund and Judge Daniel Bryan of Auburn use this procedure to showcase the role of the courts for educational purposes

Two courtrooms in the Lancaster County District

Court now also have web cameras installed. Broadcasts from the courtrooms of Judge Steve Burns and Judge Karen Flowers are available to the news media and are also fed to the University of Nebraska School of Journalism. The School of Journalism utilizes the broadcasts to familiarize journalism students with the realities of trial courts.

Democracy works best with citizen involvement, and in this age of rapid technological advancement the courts can use that technology to increase public awareness of how our courts work at all levels. Bringing the camera and the worldwide web into our courts allows Nebraska's citizens unprecedented access to the role of Nebraska's judiciary in the preservation of liberty. The courts have a great story to tell and careful use of broadcast technology in the 21st Century enhances our ability to tell that story.

Mike Heavican

Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court



Nebraska Court of Appeals

Community Outreach & School Students

Law Day is often used by the legal community as an avenue into the hearts and minds of school age children; an opportunity to celebrate the liberties and ideals that America has been afforded through equality under our judicial system.

The Nebraska Judicial Branch celebrates Law Day across the state, cosponsoring the Fifth Grade Job Shadow Program and the High School Law Day Essay Contest with the Nebraska Bar Foundation; participating in regional programming sponsored by local bar associations; and providing judges as Law Day speakers in neighborhood schools.

This year's essay contest question asks how the United States' legal system promotes the ideals expressed by our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, in the first sentence of the Gettysburg Address given on November 19, 1863:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this

continent, a new nation conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Two judges from the Nebraska Court of Appeals, Judge Richard Sievers and Judge Frankie Moore serve on the PEOPLE (Public Education Outreach Promoting Law & Equity) Committee that reviews the students' essays. The entries often impress the judges with their sophistication and level of understanding. The same is true for those of us who participate in the High School Mock Trials, Law School Moot Court competition and other student-focused activities.

This year the Nebraska Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals have been given a unique opportunity to reach-out to high school students, college-level students and the general public through the installation of cameras in both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals courtrooms. Judge William Cassel of the Court of Appeals has been instrumental in the

success of this project. As a former journalist, private Practice attorney and District Court Judge, Judge Cassel understands both the technical and practical aspects of producing and delivering sessions of the appellate courts via the internet.

Judges of the Court of Appeals have a rich history of assisting in the creation of opportunities for the upcoming generation to understand our judicial system. As volunteers, mentors and parents, we are always happy to assist with community-focused projects.

Abraham Lincoln observed, *"The philosophy of the school room in one generation will become the philosophy of government in the next."* We take that philosophy to heart and the judges of the Court of Appeals will continue our efforts to frame the future of the upcoming generation.

Rett Inbody

Chief Judge of the Nebraska Court of Appeals

